



Backcountry Camping

The woods and waterways of Big Thicket National Preserve offer several options for those looking for a primitive camping experience. While there are no developed campgrounds or campsites in the preserve, people may backpack into many areas or camp on sandbars along the the Neches River and Village Creek. Call the Big Thicket National Preserve Visitor Center at 409-951-6700 for more information on camping in the preserve.

Backcountry Camping Areas

Backcountry camping is allowed in the following units: Beaumont, Beech Creek, Big Sandy Creek , Big Sandy Creek Corridor, Lance Rosier, Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall, Turkey Creek, Upper and Lower Neches River Corridors, and Village Creek Corridor.

Camping is not allowed in the following areas:

- the Canyonlands Unit, Hickory Creek Unit, Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor, Loblolly Unit, or Menard Creek Corridor Unit;
 - within 350 yards of the Pitcher Plant Trail or south of the metal bridge over Village Creek in the Turkey Creek Unit;
 - in any area posted as a Day Use Area. This includes the Lakeview Sandbar on the Neches River and the White Sand Beach Sandbar and Island Sandbar on Village Creek. Check with visitor center staff for a complete list of Day Use areas.
 - in areas open to hunting during hunting season. However, camping is allowed on sandbars along the Neches River in the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit during hunting season.
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Backcountry Safety

Please keep safety in mind. Carry a first aid kit. Be aware of weather conditions. Use insect repellent and check often for ticks. Watch for venomous snakes, poison ivy, and fire ants. Open water is not potable; please bring all drinking water or treat collected water before use. Do not rest or camp beneath dead or dying trees.

In the event of an emergency, call 911.

Camping Permits

A free backcountry camping permit is required and must be obtained by a member of the party prior to camping.

To obtain a backcountry camping permit, visit the Big Thicket National Preserve Visitor Center, located eight miles north of Kountze, Texas, on FM 420. The Visitor Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day except for New Years Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. For more information, call 409-951-6700.

Camping Regulations

A backcountry permit is required before overnight use is allowed. Before you leave on your camping trip, please inform a friend or family member of your intended point of entry, route of travel, and time of return.

Campsites must be located at least 200 feet from all roads, trails, and unit boundaries and at least 100 feet from all water. Campsites on sandbars may be within 25 feet of the water line.

Some banks of the Neches River and Village Creek are privately owned, such as the bar at Sheffield's Ferry. You may not camp on private land without the landowner's permission.

Open fires and charcoal are allowed in all areas of the preserve that are open to camping, except during established burn bans. Fires must not be left unattended and must be completely extinguished before leaving the area. All charcoal and ashes must be completely extinguished and scattered. Camp stoves are allowed in all areas.

Trenching or leveling the ground for tents or toilet purposes is prohibited.

Human waste must be buried 6"- 8" deep and at least 50 feet from any trail or water. Toilet paper must be carried out.

Pack out all trash. Burying or burning trash is strictly prohibited!

Possession of glass containers on water courses and sandbars is prohibited.

Group size is limited to eight people. Groups must camp far enough from each other to maintain visual and noise separation.

Backcountry use is limited to 14 days per trip.

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on trails.

Horses and bicycles are allowed only on the Big Sandy Trail.

Backcountry camping is not allowed in areas open to hunting during the hunting season, with the exception of sandbars along the Neches River in the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit. Dates of hunting season vary each year and may be obtained by calling the visitor center at 409-951-6700.